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Valley Women's Voice

December 1982

Volume IV Issue 9

MARCH AGAINST THE KKK



photo by Sue Tyler

On November 6, over two hundred people marched in Northampton in protest of the Ku Klux Klan. The demonstration was organized in resistance to a proposed Klan rally scheduled for that day in Washington, D.C. The Northampton demonstration was held in conjunction with the larger, national counter-Klan demonstration mobilized by the All People's Congress in Washington. As a result of activity on the part of the All People's Congress, the KKK moved their rally outside of Washington, D.C. It is reported to have been poorly attended.

Among speakers at the Northampton demonstration were Marta Tapia of the Third World Women's Task Force and Jamie Tessler of the New Jewish Agenda. The Northampton demonstration was organized by the November 6th Coalition and GALA (Gay and Lesbian Activists). A spokesperson for GALA commented, "As the repressive forces represented by the Klan continue to rise, it is of vital importance that progressive groups and individuals band together against the perpetrators of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and anti-semitism."

VWV IN CRISIS AGAIN

In response to a hurried and not widely publicized call, more than twenty-five women attended an emergency meeting to "save the Valley Women's Voice" on November 21. The VWV collective organized the community meeting to discuss the potential folding of the Voice. The collective felt that if women did not come to the meeting or commit their time to the paper that folding could be the only course of action possible. The women at the meeting, however, were unanimous in the conviction that the VWV should be kept alive.

What has brought us once again to this crisis? Recurring difficulties--lack of funds, a staff that needs to survive financially, the overcommitment of activists, and burn-out. For several months about ten women have carried

nearly the total burden of all aspects of the VWV--editing, writing, getting ads, keeping the books, lay out and paste up, taking and printing photos, distributing, answering the phone. Since almost all of this time is volunteer, all these women must also make a living, at a time when survival itself is a risky venture. In addition to feeling burnt out and harried, the women of VWV have recently felt isolated and questioned whether the women of the Valley need and want the paper.

At the November 21 meeting, the women who are not presently part of the Voice emphasized what they considered to be the importance of the paper. We talked about many things that need improvement--a longer calendar, reflecting all the activity in the women's community, more political reporting and analysis, and a more solid relation-

ship with black and Hispanic women. However, we cannot proceed without a material base, which is presently very delicate.

The women present at the emergency meeting decided that subsequent issues of VWV should be compressed from 16 pages to 4 to 8 pages. A smaller paper will free up energy for fundraising and resource-gathering. A group of women formed to investigate grant-writing. Everyone agreed that the VWV cannot survive for long unless it is converted into an independent business which can support some of the women who work for it.

Once again we are calling on our readers for help. If you want the VWV to continue, you must help in one of several ways. We need resources--in office equipment, light tables, typesetters, paper, and money. We need long

term sources of steady income, and women who are willing to think seriously about generating loans and grants which would establish us solidly as a business. We need women to work in our advertising accounts (on a commission basis). During our transition from a UMass affiliate to an independent business, we especially need UMass students (interns, work-study, or volunteers) to maintain our current business relationship with the university. And we need your ideas for things that should be in the paper, and your commitment to put them there.

As always, there will be no January issue of the Valley Women's Voice. We will be back in February, briefer in scope but larger in spirit.

Newsbriefs

Mount Holyoke And The CIA

On Friday, October 29, fifty students and faculty held a sit-in to protest the presence of the CIA on campus. The CIA was there to recruit students. While the CIA held group meetings, protesters distributed leaflets which described CIA activities in this country and in other countries. Some documented incidents included: the assassination attempt on Fidel Castro, the overthrow of President Allende in Chile, the installation of the late Shah in Iran, and the infiltration of U.S. universities. Protesting students said they wanted to make people aware of what the CIA really stands for.

The protesters believe that CIA presence at Mount Holyoke contradicts the ideals the college claims to uphold. The recruitment policy at the college presently allows any organization to recruit on campus. Many protesters believe Mount Holyoke has a moral obligation to exclude those groups which violate college principles.

Examples of such groups include multinationals with investments in South Africa, the Ku Klux Klan, and the National Security Agency. At present there is nothing to prevent these organizations from recruiting at the college. Many of these protesters hope to convince the college to adopt a new recruitment policy.

Victories at G.E.

General Electric Co. and the Eastern Mass. Electrical Workers Union settled in an out-of-court agreement following four years of litigation. The terms will allow more pay hikes for women and end a number of previously "male only" jobs.

This sex bias settlement will affect about 3,000 women employed in Wilmington and West Lynn, Mass.,

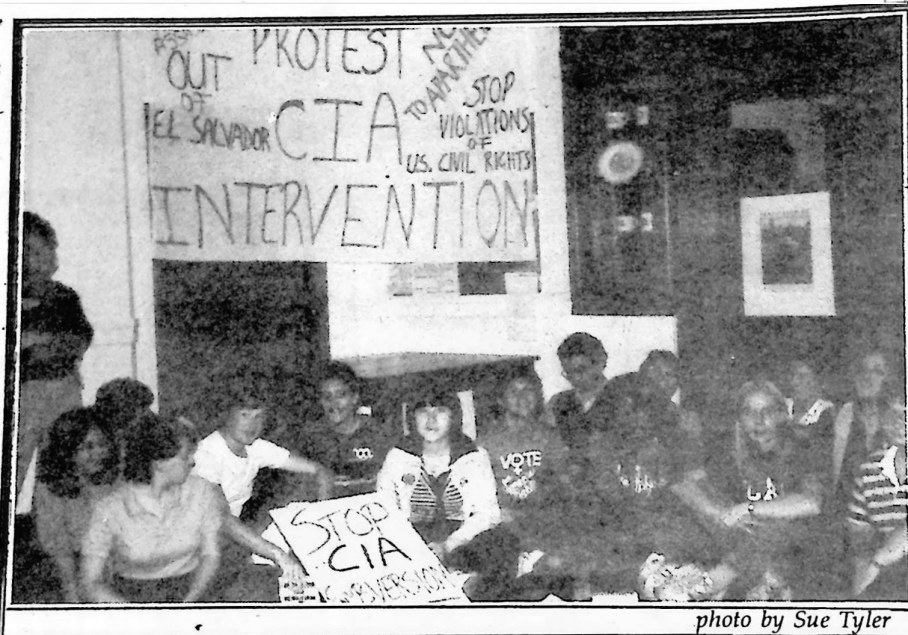


photo by Sue Tyler

where the workforce has been mostly female.

The settlement will cost GE \$180,000 per year in Wilmington and \$50,000 per year in West Lynn. another \$75,000 will be distributed to retired women.

The settlement also calls for training programs for women in previously male dominated jobs such as welding and machine maintenance. There will be on-the-job training and an increase in craft training. The settlement will also increase pregnancy and maternity benefits.

-Boston Globe

Joyce Brewster Wins Suit

A former Martin Marietta Corp. saleswoman who claimed sex discrimination has been awarded more than \$1.2 million.

A Wayne County Circuit Court jury found the company broke an implied contract with Joy Brewster and discriminated against her by not considering her aggressive style in the same light that

it would have if she were a man.

Brewster, who sold aluminum products for Martin Marietta in the Detroit area, worked for the company for eighteen years before being fired in 1975 for insubordination.

Brewster repeatedly won sales awards and was one of the top sale representatives in the company.

-Associated Press

West Virginian Women Workers

West Virginia leads the way in hiring women highway workers but falters in the mines.

According to a story by Deborah Churchman in the *Christian Science Monitor*, West Virginia's Department of Highways was top in the country during 1981 construction season in exceeding the female employment goal set by the U.S. Office of Federal Contract Compliance. West Virginia had 7.8% women in construction.

According to Jesse Haynes, equal-employment officer for W. Va. Dept. of Highways, there is no longer a problem finding women carpenters, masons, and teamsters, but there is trouble finding electricians and iron-workers.

The Department, working with the Laborers and Teamsters Union, has started a 1,000-hour training program for women and minorities to help them qualify for union membership. The article did not say what percent do not make it into the unions after finishing the program.

Last September, the Associated Press reported that eight West Virginia female miners settled a \$5.5 million invasion of privacy lawsuit with Consolidated Coal Co. for an undisclosed amount. The women had discovered a peep-hole between their locker room and a room used by male foremen at the Shoemaker Mine in Benwood, W. Va.

On the TV program "60 Minutes," the eight miners said sexual harassment on the job went far beyond this incident. Footage of an all-female coal miners' conference revealed sexual harassment underground as the women miners' major concern.

Women in Government

As a result of November elections, there are now 966 female state legislators. But that number represents only 13% of the nation's lawmaking seats. However it represents a doubling in the past decade.

Women made increases in 27 states. The largest gains were 10 in Florida, 8 in Mass. and 7 in Maryland. The National Organization for Women worked hard in Florida and Illinois to defeat law-

Collective Box

Valley Women's Voice

Graphic by Wendy Simpson

Collective:

Katrinca, Dale LaBonte, Wendy Simpson, Sid Schofield, Sue Fisher, Kathleen Moran, Iris Young, Toby Schermerhorn, Camille Norton, Gini Irvine, Diane Jensen.

Mothers:

Michaelann, Marcia black, Katie Hogan, Patty McGill, Maureen Carney, Ann Bolger, Cathy Thatcher, Cathy Collins, Carey Caccavo, Ellen LaFleche, Fran Schwartzberg.

Editorial:

Katie O'Shea, Wendy Simpson, Sue Fisher, Iris Young, Dale LaBonte, Gini Irvine, Camille Norton (coordinator), Jean Grossholtz, Pam Niehoff, Maryanne.

Photography:

Sue Tyler (coordinator), Julie LaFreniere, Stacey Styles.

Graphics:

Becky LaMothe, Wendy Simpson (coordinator), Linda Calver, Dory Hippauf.

Production:

Sue Tyler, Pam Purdy, Pam Niehoff, Diane Murray, Anne Wright, Marsha Harper-Raredon, Gini Irvine, Camille Norton, Linda Calver, Judy Hait, Diane Jensen, Wendy Simpson, Katrinca (coordinator), Jean Grossholtz, Ilona Sturn.

Advertising & Distribution

Wendy Simpson (Advertising Coordinator), Susan Deiner, Diane Tommasetti, Karen Wheelock, Sid Schofield (distribution coordinator), Karen Wheelock, Judy Hait, Fran Schwartzburg, Wendy, Diane Jensen, Pam Purdy.

makers who held out on the ERA ratification. In Florida, women state senators increased from 4 to 9, and in Illinois from 4 to 7.

The largest women's delegation is still in New Hampshire with 119 women or 28.8%. Connecticut has the second largest delegation with 44 women making up 23.5% of the seats. Only two state legislatures have no women representatives, the Louisiana and Mississippi senates.

-Christian Science Monitor

Infant Rape

A nineteen-year-old man, Floriberto Sousa, was released on a \$100 bond after being accused of raping a 21-month-old girl. The man's mother was the child's baby sitter. East Cambridge, Mass., District Court Judge, Harry Lack said he did not require a higher bail because the accused had no criminal record and had family ties in Cambridge. The child's father, Marco Gamboa of Brookline said, "The system is not working for innocent people, and with the magnitude of the crime, the bail should be way higher."



Linda Adams ran the New York marathon, this year setting a personal record. She finished the 26 mile course in 2 hours and 55 minutes.

NALL Threatened

On December 8 several alarming phone calls were received by the New Alexandria Lesbian Library in Northampton. One male caller threatened to "get" the manager of the Library and all other "dykes" in the area. Police have been notified and are investigating.

Women connected with the Library feel it is important to view this threat in context with other recent attacks on Lesbian and Gay organizations including the burning of Gay Community News in Boston last July and threats received by the Lesbian Herstory Archives in New York.

Any women receiving similar phone calls are encouraged to contact the police.

Blind Equality

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights recently released a report on minority unemployment in the past decade. The document indicates that job discrimination exists at alarming levels among all black and hispanic women and men, and all white women.

The findings include the following: black males are more "overeducated" for their jobs than white males; black females have the highest rate of poverty among all workers; white females are concentrated in low-paying jobs; and although having an education helps all workers, it helps white males the most.

The report showed that disparity in unemployment rates rose in the past decade, with minority workers hardest hit, within the weakening economy. But, even in good economic times, the unemployment rate is twice as high among minorities.

The report strongly contradicted arguments by conservative economists and sociologists that high unemployment is caused by education, training, geographic location, or the white male work ethic.

Members of the Commission with different political loyalties responded differently. Murray Saltzman said the Reagan administration has failed to enforce job-discrimination laws. The report disputed Administration arguments that employment discrimination has ended and affirmation-action programs can be discontinued.

A Reagan appointee to the Commission disagreed, saying that affirmative action programs have become the "racial spoils system in America." He agrees with Reagan's policy of color-blind racial equality.

-Washington Post

Reagan vs. the Poor

William F. Harvey, the Reagan-appointed Board Chair of Legal Services Corp., has proposed regulations that would curb class-action suits. Previously Legal Services lawyers have used successful class-action suits to force federal, state and local governments to improve conditions in various institutions and programs. Successful class-action suits have been brought against prison systems for overcrowding, mental institutions for poor living conditions and public housing programs for segregation. The proposed new regulations would make it very difficult for government-funded poverty lawyers to file such suits against government agencies on behalf of poor people.

When Reagan took office he tried unsuccessfully to get Congress to abolish Legal Services. Reagan then nominated a new 11-member board that

shared his philosophy.

Ellen Vargyas, National Legal Aid and Defenders Association attorney, called the proposed rules a "blatant violation of the Services Act"

-Washington Post

King Axes Women

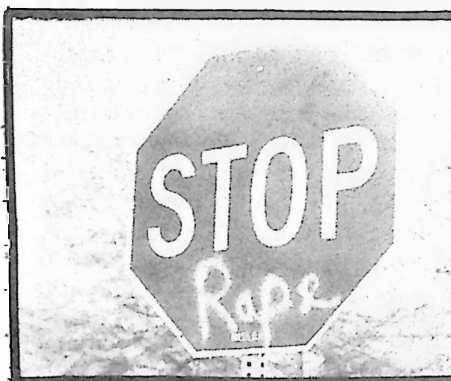
Governor Edward J. King's four recent appointments to the State Board of Regents further lowered the minority representation at the decision making level in higher education. The composition of the body which oversees the State's higher education system is 14 white males and one white female. Governor King failed to reappoint Elizabeth Rawlins, an associate professor at Simmons College. Rawlins was the only black and one of two women on the board. The remaining female is Sister Janet Eisner, President of Emmanuel College.

Members of the Mass. Commission Black Caucus and the board of the Women's Commission in Exile strongly objected to King's appointments. The four new white male members include a high technology company official, a banker, a Charlestown lawyer and a labor leader.

Ukrainian Poet Arrested

Irina Ratushinskaya, a 28 year old poet, was arrested Sept. 17 in Kiev after she failed to heed authorities' warnings to cease writing poetry. In a search of her apartment, authorities confiscated copies of her poetry, personal notes, tape recordings and books published in the West.

-Baltimore Sun



NGTF Crisisline

The National Gay Task Force has, through the generous assistance of local organizations like Chelsea Gay Association, opened its toll-free CRISISLINE, a national telephone number which will be used to compile nationwide statistics on homophobic violence, and to provide callers with access to local hotlines and support services.

The NGTF CRISISLINE is open weekdays from noon to 6:00 p.m. EST, and is staffed by volunteers who have undergone rigorous "hotline training." The toll-free number is 800-221-7044. In New York State, call (212) 807-6016.

Religion First For Glaser

Pam Glaser, top-ranked U.S. female in amateur Karate chose not to compete in tryouts for the U.S. National Karate Team. The tryouts were on Sept. 18, Rosh Hashonah, the Jewish new year. Although Glaser had requested a date change in July, when she first learned of the date, the national Amateur Athletics Union Karate Committee refused to change the date.

Glaser, who holds a 2nd degree black belt and competes in the Kata form of Karate, put her religion first.

Now, a decision by U.S. District Judge Rya Zobel ordered that she be made a full member of the U.S. Team competing in Taiwan for the 5th World Championship.

-Associated Press

U.N. Endorses Freeze

On November 24th, the United Nations General Assembly's political and security committee voted overwhelmingly to call for a freeze on nuclear weapons production. The first resolution calling for a general freeze by all countries possessing nuclear weapons was approved 105-16 with 8 abstentions. The second resolution calling for a five-year freeze by the U.S. and the Soviet Union passed 103-17 with 6 abstentions. The Soviet Union voted yes on both, the U.S. voted no. Also voting no were Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, W. Germany, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, and Britain. Japan voted against the five-year freeze and abstained on the general freeze.

-Associated Press

Red Scare

Reagan continued his attack on the National Nuclear Freeze Movement during a televised speech Nov. 11, 1982. Reagan said there was no question that "foreign agents" instigated and helped keep the Freeze going. Mass. Rep. Edward Markey accused Reagan of "McCarthyist" tactics which impugn those who oppose him in policy.

The only named infiltrator was the USSR funded World Peace Council, which is almost nonexistent in the U.S. freeze movement. Other evidence was taken from an Oct. Readers Digest article, "The KGB's Magical War for Peace" by John Barron.

One week later the National Conference of Catholic Bishops endorsed a proposed pastoral letter opposing the use of nuclear weapons. The letter will go to 50 million people next May. The White House reacted by having William Clark, national Security Advisor, send the bishops a letter (via the N.Y. Times) which lectured the bishops on morality.

-Boston Globe



Letters



Support for VWV

Dear VWV,

I was a little dismayed and a little disappointed to find out that the *Valley Women's Voice* might not publish anymore. It is sort of a shock to me when a form of women's media is not being supported or represented in this so-called "liberal" valley. Last year "Chomo Uri" also shut down publication and left a lot of talented women without jobs or a way of expressing themselves artistically.

I feel that it is time that we give these women support and encouragement for their efforts in presenting news and articles that have a profound effect on people and usually move people to action. For instance, the recent articles on battering, supporting the shelters for these women, resources available, nuclear weapons and dangers thereof and of course the problems of the third world have all been very interesting and inspiring.

I myself am thankful for having this sort of reading material available and I am sure others will follow in my footsteps.

Thank you and good luck VWV.
Maralyn Goldstein



Report From Michigan

Dear Sisters,

This letter is to give womyn who have asked for additional information on the land fund, land ownership and WWTMC business structure a clearer picture of our organization including the land purchase plan.

WWTMC is owned and operated by Lisa and Kristie Vogel. We are two of the five original Collective members who

formulated the initial festival plans in 1975. Our beginning legal structure was a Non-Profit Corporation and we remained a collective for the following four years. By 1980 the business had evolved into a cooperative structure with two remaining original collective members (Kris and Lisa) acting as Directors—guiding the progression of the festival and assuming the business liabilities.

The business debts following the 1981 festival (totalling \$35,000) forced the closure of the Non-Profit business. We then formed a temporary (for profit) Partnership and continued to work in cooperation with the 150 womyn who coordinate the various areas of the festival. The present cooperative structure is comprised of a group of coordinator-elected representatives with whom we define and establish policies that affect the internal workings of the festival, political policies, and general festival direction. Kristie and I maintain autonomy in the purely business (and purely personal...) matters of the festival while individual coordinators maintain autonomy in their respective areas.

The financial backing for the new land has been accumulating from two sources—the business (WWTMC) and community donations (collected through mail, at the festival, and community fundraising events). Separate land fund ledgers have been kept for both income and expenditures. The initial "earnest money" put down on the land bid came from \$2,000 in land donations collected at the 1981 festival and \$5,000 from the business. Throughout 1982 there has been approximately \$10,000 raised for the land primarily through the raffle and miscellaneous donations. The business has invested (1982) \$24,480 in land electricity, \$9,500 in water wells, \$2,000 in road repair, \$900 in security gates—totalling \$36,880. Each of these investments would have

had to be made by anyone purchasing the property and each of these investments will remain on the land if and when we leave. The size of the improvements are of course festival scale, and we are now in the process of figuring out what is really a festival expenditure and what is clearly expected land development. Sizable improvements still need to be made, particularly those needed to provide disabled access to the land.

Given these elements, we will be putting the land deed into the names of Kristie and Lisa Vogel. The policies governing land usage and accompanying issues will be made by Kristie, Lisa and the Coordinator-Representatives. Although we are hopeful about our land donation drive, even with the entire community behind us 100%, it will be difficult to raise the remainder of the \$50,000 down payment through contributions by the October 15th deadline. Kris and I each have taken only a \$4,000 salary for our full year's work in order to put the remainder of our projected salaries into the land fund. We are presently lining up loans (which at this time are the business's liabilities) to help cover what we are unable to raise through donations and fundraising. We will continue to research an alternative business structure to define our company and the land ownership. We will also continue to research investment possibilities that are broader ranged than donations and loans. But for now this is where we stand.

We realize that some womyn may have difficulty with two womyn's names being on this deed. We hope that this letter clarifies our reasoning for this choice. We understand that other womyn simply wanted to know what was doing—and we hope that this letter answers your questions. We know that we need the support of our community, both soulfully and financially, to pull this project off. We also know that we're

asking for this help within a short time frame in order to meet the October 15th deadline. We can do it if you're with us, and we here are doing all we can.

There will be other updates coming through the womyn's press on our progress with securing the land and our evolving legal/organizational structures. Please feel free to write with your questions, criticisms, suggestions and support. We'll answer you as quickly and as thoroughly as we can.

Thank you for your consideration.

Womonkindly,

1501 Lyons St.
Mt. Pleasant, Mi 48858
Lisa Vogel
for WWTMC

Lesbian Community Fund

Dear Valley Women's Voice women:

Last month I put a letter into the *Voice* about the Community Fund, on the Lesbian Page. I had meant my name to go at the end of the letter, but I guess that wasn't clear, because it was left off. I'm wondering if you could put a little note on the Lesbian Page again, or somewhere in the paper, stating that I am the person who wrote the letter, and am running the Fund. Women should contact me at P.O. Box 159, Hadley, MA. 01035, or #549-5582, to give donations or to receive grants or loans.

Thanks very much--sorry for the misunderstanding!

Janet Feldman

LETTERS!

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VWV-Letters

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ONE WOMAN'S ARMY

by Jasmine Elefthenakis

I joined the army eight years ago for several reasons, among them to gain musical experience as a member of an army band, and to have access to educational benefits and travel. These were the common rationalizations I fed to my family and friends. Although these factors were present and true enough, I really joined the army out of fear. As a senior in high school I was faced with (I thought) two options: go to college or be a bum. Both choices triggered massive anxiety. The army seemed a much less threatening dilemma.

An ad in a magazine prompted me to call my local recruiter, Sgt. "straight poop" Blase. Ten minutes later I had been scheduled for an audition with a bandmaster in Boston. I passed the audition and was offered my pick of several bands in this country and abroad. Of the bands with projected openings for french horn players, I chose San Francisco without hesitation. I was also guaranteed a promotion to the rank of sergeant within a year of my enlistment. Sgt. Blase had me in the bag. He sensed my indecision and offered me just the incentives I needed to sign my life away.

Sgt. Blase shared his recruiting office with Sgt. Hanlon, a woman. She visited me at home a few times and accompanied me to the police station to be fingerprinted when the time came. Sgt. Hanlon painted a jolly picture of life in the army. She used the word "fun" to describe basic training. She said it was something like summer camp, only they used real bullets.

I reported to the induction center at 8 A.M. the morning of my swearing-in and was poked with more needles than I knew existed. I was administered a battery of tests and attended numerous orientation meetings. Everyone was polite and courteous. That afternoon I was flown to Atlanta, Georgia where I met the other 39 women who, for the next eight weeks comprised my

"platoon." After a four-hour wait at the airport, we were bussed to Fort McClellan in Anniston, Alabama. We were greeted by the single most disagreeable person I thought I'd ever meet. I was wrong, the place was crawling with them. They are called Drill Sergeants.

It's true what they say: basic training is hell. A typical day started at 4:00 A.M. with reveille piped over the intercom. They gave us 1/2 hour to dress, stow, our gear, make our beds "army style" (easily a one hour job by itself), and report outside for formation. I often felt like one of Hogan's Heroes at this time of the morning. We ran for 3/4 of an hour and returned to the barracks just long enough to "press off" - iron our fatigues and shine our boots for morning inspection.

After inspection, we stood in line at the mess hall awaiting admittance. Here, as elsewhere, we were not allowed to talk while we stood at attention waiting to be served. As for menu selection we were given two choices: take it or leave it. Since eating was the least stressful event in our regime, most took it.

Our days were filled with classes, physical training, more "pressing off," and more inspections. We received instruction in C.P.R., first aid, map reading, survival, weapons training, military law and customs, and, believe it or not, the proper application of make-up. We ran, did calisthenics, maneuvered around, under and over an obstacle course and learned a modicum of self-defense. We marched everywhere. When running, we ran in step to various "calls" from the drill sergeant. If a woman seemed ready to expire it wasn't uncommon for one of her buddies to lend support, either emotional or physical.

Punishment was an essential part of boot camp. Drill sergeants prided themselves on their various and creative disciplinary procedures. It was not unusual, for example, to see a woman completely outfitted (with helmet, canteen, pack, combat boots, and M16 raised high overhead), running in a



photo courtesy of the Sixth Army Band Presidio of San Francisco

perfect 360-degree circle, loudly repeating, "I will not talk in formation, Drill Sergeant."

I remember returning to the barracks from the mess hall one morning in time to witness a mattress plummet from the third floor of the barracks to the ground below. This was the drill sergeant's way of saying something wasn't quite right.

Each platoon "lived" in one long room—forty cots arranged in groups of four and surrounded by wall and foot lockers. My bunk was in the far right corner. I shared this space with three black women. We were known affectionally as "the ghetto and the Greek."

There was no privacy. Everybody knew everyone's business all the time. Two women from another platoon were turned in for sleeping together one night and the whole company was in an uproar. If there were any lesbians in my platoon they certainly hid it well. Everyone feared a witch hunt. Some drill sergeants were known to threaten expulsion if they caught anyone "messin' in anyone else's panties."

Eight weeks seemed like forever, but before long came "summer camp," known as Advanced Individual Training. In my case it was music school in Norfolk, VA. Most women didn't know where they would be sent until they got there. Some of my buddies ended up in clerical or cooking school, some in M.P. school. The length of A.I.T. varied from one course of study to another. Music school was six months long unless one was fortunate enough to "advance out." Because the bands are more visible to the public than any other unit in the army, music school was big on spit and polish. We drilled for hours each day and were instructed in the proper wearing of the various uniforms we were issued.

Graduation from A.I.T. signaled our entrance into the army proper. We were no longer trainees, but soldiers. I was transferred to San Francisco and promoted. I immediately took an apartment in Haight-Ashbury, as barracks life had worn thin at this point.

I was only the third or fourth woman in

cont. on page 14

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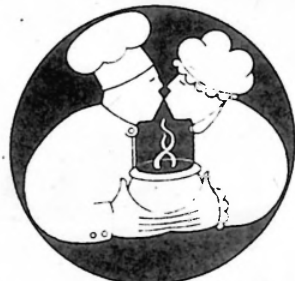
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THE FIRE IN FIER

by Laura Anderson &
Wendy Simpson

The evening of Sunday Nov. 14th began with intimate greetings. Debbie Fier, widely recognized among members of the women's community, performed at the Hotel Northampton, Northampton, MA., to celebrate her first album release. A spirit of cheer warmed the November chill. There was something that made this event noticeably different from others; it was like a large extended family gathering to celebrate the products of a long years' toil. People travelled from the hilltowns as well as from more local areas to offer support and to rejoice in the release of *In Your Hands*. Jodi Cahn, a relaxed and confident MC for *Variations-on-a-Theme Productions*, reflected upon the familial energy in the room when she said, "This concert feels like home."

An enthusiastic audience welcomed Debbie and the very talented members of the band whose combined efforts

created a musical networking between three cities. They are: Jean Fineberg, N.Y.C., on alto saxophone and flute; Ellen Seeling, N.Y.C., on trumpet; Nuru Dafina, Boston, MA., on congas and hand percussion; Renee Purnell, Boston, on fretless electric bass; and Claire Arenius, Northampton, MA., on drums. The opening number, "Dancing to Live Music," was well-executed but didn't seem to meet the audience's high excitement level. Debbie acknowledged the uncontrollable air of anticipation by exclaiming, "This room is charged!" However, in the two songs that followed, she effectively calmed her audience.

Her second song "Guiding Light," revealed the importance of being "guided" through these rough times by one's own inner light. Debbie's struggle with her emotions, often getting "the better of her," were mirrored in a bluesy rendition of "Sometimes." Jean Fineberg augmented the song with a gutsy sax solo. "Music's Message," a piano solo

written three years ago, is one of her few songs that has remained unchanged. A weave of sensitive chords evoked both the positive and negative aspects of a crisis situation that Debbie once experienced. The song ended on a positive note, a healing power inherent in all music. "Reflections," a duet with Jean accompanying Debbie on sax, exhibited Jean's careful ear as she blended with the changing dynamics of Debbie's voice.

The upbeat tempo of the last three songs, "Backwoods Boogie," "Rocky Mountains," and "Animation Strut," picked up the energy once again. At times during "Backwoods Boogie" you could see the hiss of steam escaping Ellen Seeling's vibrant trumpet. Even though the final note was missed, "Backwoods" boogied! In "Rocky Mountains," Debbie created a vivid analogy between the boldness of the mountains and the love of women. The "Mountains" were surpassed only by

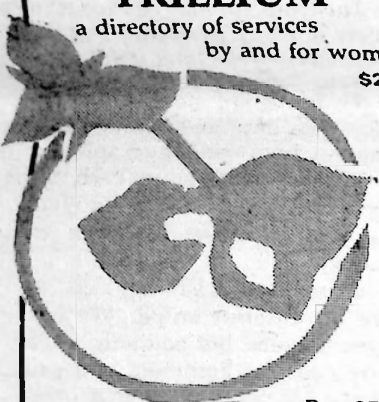
Claire Arenius' tight rhythm in the introduction maintaining the strength and intensity needed.

The first set ended with a powerful but somewhat chaotic version of "Animation Strut," with the musicians seemingly swept away by the momentum created.

The highlights of the second set, which also included: "Night Sea Journey," "Fantasy," "Sisters of the Moon," and "Spirit Healer," were "Earthdance," "Accept the Change," and "Back to the Womb." "Earthdance," a full-scale percussion jam, prompted dancing in the aisles. Nuru Dafina, an experienced percussionist, led the jam. We wish that we could have heard more from the steady but less conspicuous bassist, Renee Purnell. Throughout the evening, everyone had the chance to solo with the exception of this fine musician.

cont. on page 14

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Rhythms of Life: Astrological Cycles

by Ellen Perchonock

Welcome to our monthly cosmic trip through the interweaving of our earthly lives and heavenly influences. The guide for our journey is humanistic astrology, the language of energy. Your individual birth chart is a map for evolution and development--your celestial name. The "Harmony of the spheres," vibrations of planetary energies that resonate together, produce the individual chord of your being. Awareness, the development of will, and psychological and spiritual techniques for growth can transmute even the most discordant notes and bring them into a harmonious and resonant whole.

Learning to use the language of astrology can enrich your understanding of yourself and your relationships, of how, when and why your life cycles unfold. It allows you to reap the benefits of growth opportunities that these cycles present to you in a centered way, rather than being overwhelmed by external events.

Transits, the current passages of the planets in the sky making correspondences to your natal chart, provide you with the opportunity for working on problem areas of your chart/your self. By resonating with planets in your chart, the transiting planets activate patterns of behavior and energy imbalances, sometimes in a forceful way, indicating to you the larger cycles in your life and the proper timing for working on that part of you (e.g., the infamous Saturn return). Why should this be?

As the old hermetic teachings said there is a correspondence between the energies up there and energies on the earth, in our bodies (popularly known as "as above, so below"), just as there is such a correspondence between our inner states, our level of consciousness, and what we experience out in the world. Once you accept that you are the co-creator of your reality, events don't have to "happen" to you from outside. If you are flexible, open to examining and adjusting your attitudes and behavior, you can deal with most transits on an inner level and willingly change your consciousness instead of being forced to do so eventually through some concrete, possibly irreversible experience in the world brought about by your resistance to any such changes.

So what can be said about how the

stars affect masses of people in general? In a sense, we--our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies--join together to form a planetary being. And while we don't have a "birth chart" for our planet, there are times, for example during the water sign months, especially Scorpio and Pisces, when as a whole planet we seem to be more open and receptive to each other on an emotional, psychic or astral level. Unfortunately because of the prevalence of negative thinking and violent emotions in the world, these months are often periods when it seems we can too easily pick up and absorb everyone's psychic garbage, and things feel emotionally heavy and troubled. At these times we are called on to do our planetary service of trying to transmute others' negativity into light, love and harmony.

On a global level, there do exist "charts" for many countries, and astrologers are fond of making predictions about economics, politics, possible catastrophic earth changes, etc. There are some remarkable correlations between planetary cycles and corresponding economic cycles, political changes, etc., often at a quite detailed level (e.g., see Barry Lynes' book, *The Next 20 Years*). Aside from fascinating conversational material, there is not too much most of us can do with this information on a personal level.

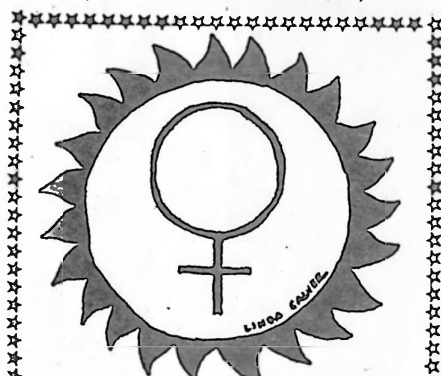
Furthermore, most prediction-oriented writings are a combination of intellectual projections and intuitive or psychic flashes based on correlating the planetary positions in the heavens with horoscopes of various countries, statesmen, etc., or on the planets alone. There is no way for you to relate this to your own life unless you know your natal chart and can determine whether any of these planetary positions make close connections with something in your chart. This cannot be emphasized enough. *Nothing* that appears in any daily newspaper "horoscope"--in case you hadn't already guessed--can have more than a random chance of relating to you. The natal chart consists of hundreds of factors: the basic level alone involves your sun, moon, moon phase, ascendant, 8 planets, all modified by signs, aspects (connections between the planets) and houses. This all has to be

synthesized to reveal the essential significant energies of the person, modified by their background--childhood environment, education, level of conscious awareness (not revealed by the chart), etc. Added to this is the indispensable (for me) intuitive knowledge derived from the direct experience with the person, the dialogue. Also, many astrologers have psychic abilities which they use altogether with astrology; these are only as clear and accurate as their development and training allows.

In other words, the only way to know how to even approach the whole subject of astrology in a fair way is to learn what it is and what it is not. As Sir Isaac Newton is reputed to have said to a critic of astrology, "I have studied the subject, sir and you have not." And the only way to decide on the validity in your life of anything mentioned here is to acquire the tools to do so: a copy of your natal chart, the meanings of planets and signs, an astrology calendar with the daily positions of the planets, then observing correlations for awhile, and trusting your intuition. No one can tell you what's going to happen to you better than you can sense it yourself, if you listen quietly to your inner voice.

The most accessible cycle for us to tune into, in general, is the lunation cycle, the phases of the moon. Having female bodies has given us the advantage of being much more aware of cyclic phenomena in general, as well as being more aware than most men of the lunar energy--so we can more easily come to a balance between knowing when to let go and when to stick to our plans, when to accept whatever is and when to apply our will to change things.

(to be continued next month)



graphic by Linda Calver

This Month's Phenomenon

New Moon in Sagittarius, Dec. 15, 4:18 am, EST, at 23°04'. partial eclipse of the sun.

Full Moon in Cancer, Dec. 30, 6:32 am, at 8°27'. (Sun at 8°27' capricorn). Total eclipse of Moon.

Winter Solstice, Sun enters Capricorn Dec. 21, at 11:38 pm.

This month the sun is passing through Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 21), ruled by Jupiter--thus the traditionally jovial nature of the holiday season ushered in by Thanksgiving, a time of buoyant spirits, enjoyment and sharing. The essential sagittarian energy involves expansion of one's consciousness (through philosophical/spiritual study and travel) aspiring to a greater understanding of the inner meaning of life, to Truth; a broad, future-oriented perspective, encompassing ever more distant horizons.

With the Winter Solstice on Dec. 21, the beginning of Capricorn, darkest time of the year, the energy turns deeply within, a time for contemplation (as befits this season's weather), in great contrast to the outgoing sagittarian energy, which seems to carry us through until Christmas, slightly past the solstice. But then the saturnian energies catch up with us: you have probably noticed the lack of enthusiasm for celebrating New Year's, the post-X-mas blues' that many people are subject to at this time--if I recall, the time of the highest incidence of suicides.

The winter solstice is indeed a time of great spiritual energy; in esoteric terms, a time for initiation into life's mysteries on the inner planes--and Christmas is the festival of the yearly rebirth of the (Christ) Light within us all, when we can renew ourselves on a spiritual level. But for those not yet aware of or attuned to these subtler energies, to the seasonal cycles, and not accustomed to looking within, trying to carry on with the jupiterian energy at this time creates a basic inner disharmony which manifests as depression--a misuse or negative expression of saturnian energy. For Saturn, ruler of Capricorn, the ancient teacher, representing structure and form (necessary for energy to manifest on the physical plane) and the crystallized ego boundaries, requires understanding, patience and discipline in order to reap its benefits of wisdom gained through (sometimes painful) experience.

Note: Please send in your requests for particular topics in astrology that you would like to have clarified or discussed. Also, I am looking for a cartoonist or artist interested in drawing an astrology comic strip with me.

Ellen Perchonock has been involved with astrology since 1967. She is currently teaching a class on the astrology of relationships, and does counseling with astrology and flower essences. She was a co-leader of a women's group in Amsterdam, where she studied meditation and healing for six years.

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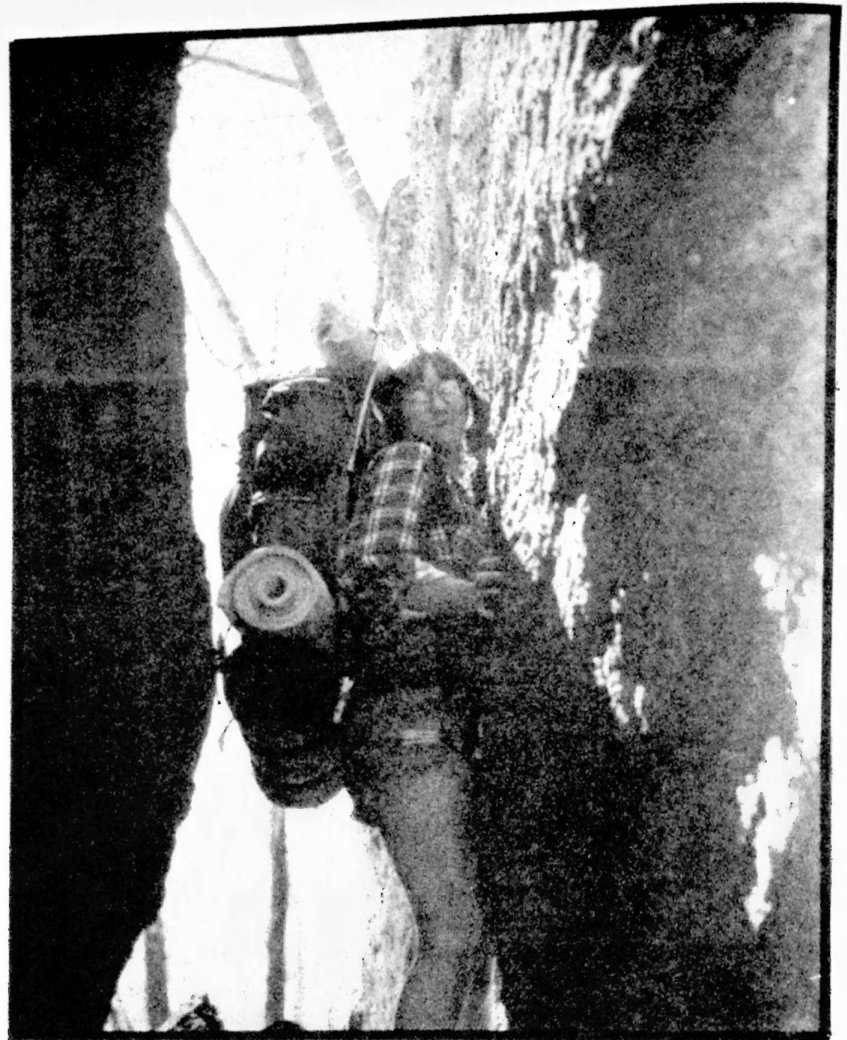
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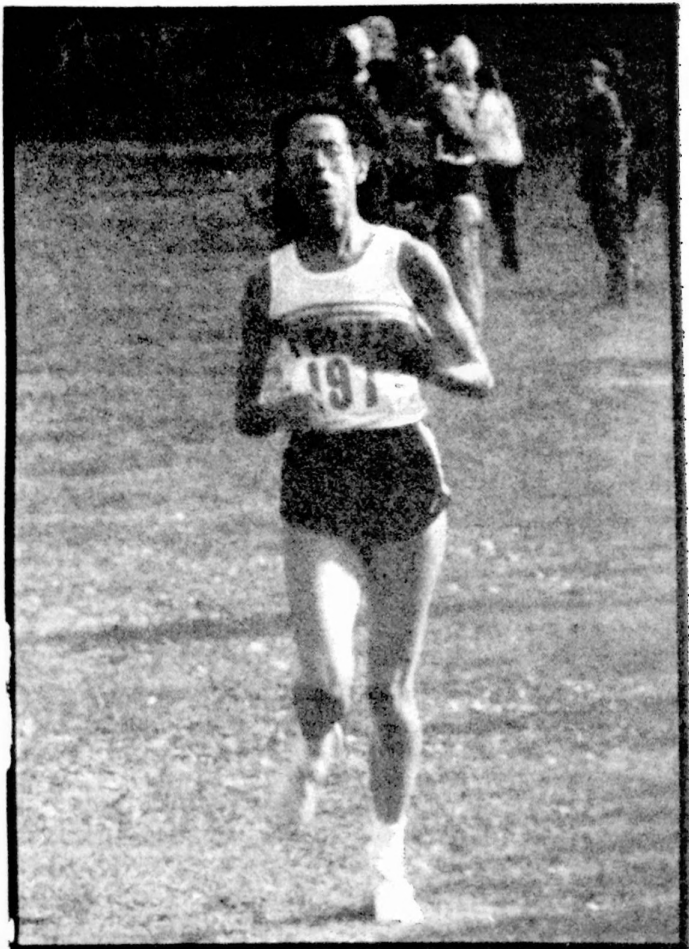


Valley women made a strong show of support at the Anti-Klan March in November.
photo by Sue Tyler

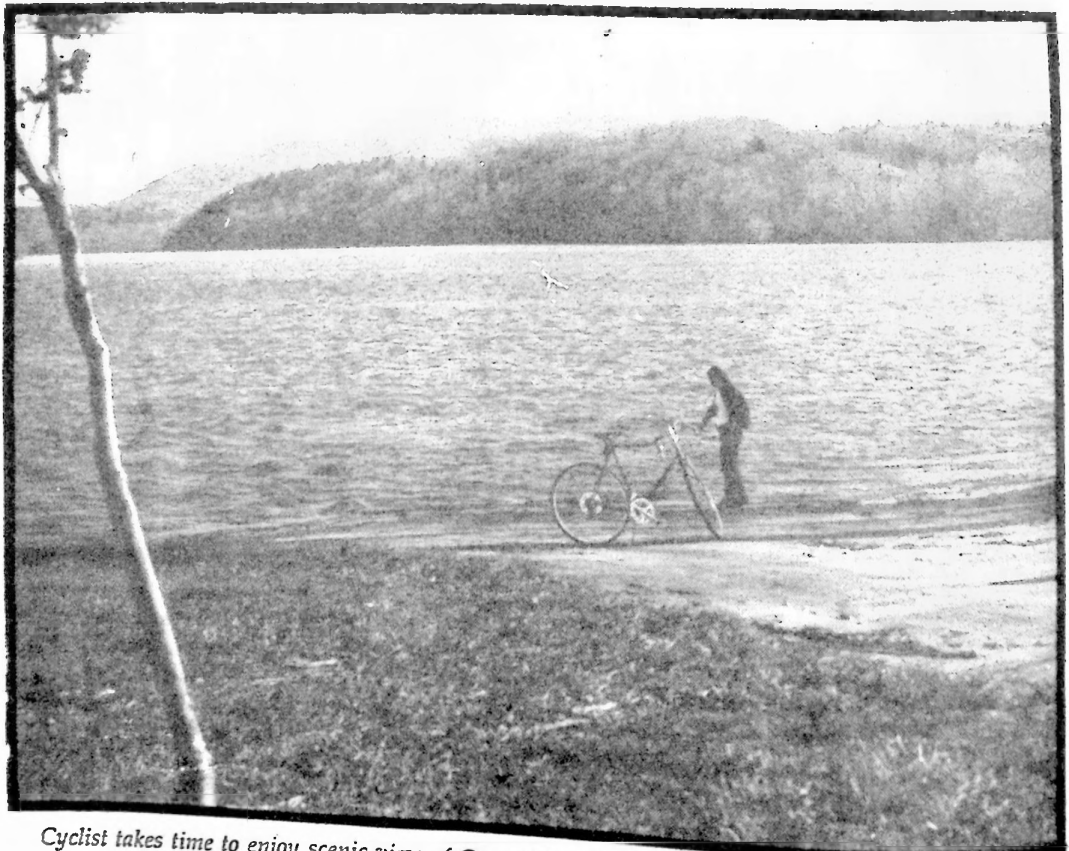


Metacomet-Monadnock Trail provides a challenge for VWV woman.
photo by Julie LaFreniere

WOMEN ON THE MOVE



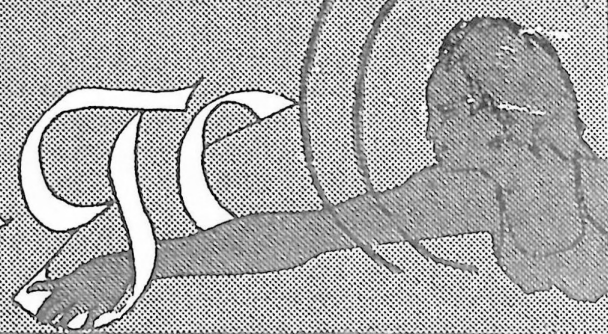
New England Women's Cross-Country Championship-Division I-
Nancy Scardina was the first to finish the 3.2 mile course at Franklin
Park in Boston to win the event.
photo by Sue Tyler



Cyclist takes time to enjoy scenic view of Connecticut River.

photo by Sue Tyler

lesbian page



A Lesbian Speaks To Straight Friend

by Linda-M. Waite

My Friend,

Perhaps since we last talked, you've had a chance to start to learn about lesbians and our lifestyles. You may have realized that we (the vast majority of us) bond on affectional levels to depths much more lasting and important than those reached through a good orgasm or a romantic night in front of the fireplace. It is that depth of connection, that level of what a few of us call "being reached" that drew me to women and keeps me celebrating the day I finally allowed myself this joy. It is the journey into the depth of that other person, and the opening up that comes with letting myself be reached on these levels, that is the essence of my partnership with Judy. We work hard, and have grown tremendously as an "us." I am

learning to build an "us" that also includes and is dependent on building "Linda" and building "Judy."

The experience of "being reached" and of reaching into that other person is like the door to the power and magnificence I feel inside me. The love and joy I am privileged to exchange with Judy is the most positive, powerful part of me—it is "me" at my best. That best has been reached after conquering the self-hate and negative socialization that told me that being a lesbian, that committing my life and love to women and to another woman, is sick, disgusting, criminal and destructive.

You've told me that you're sick of hearing about my lesbianism. Since I usually talk with you about my relationship with Judy and my job, I am left to assume that any reference to Judy is a

reference to lesbianism. The thought of having my love, sharing joy, fighting, learning, building, and harmony with Judy implicitly reduced to the act of FUCKING (as though lesbianism referred only to sex and who shared my bed, and had nothing to do with affection and who shares my life) is so repulsive to me that I can hardly do my own anger justice. Reducing my existence and my relationship with my lover to merely sex, is inaccurate, if not incredible.

When I say I'm a lesbian, I am owning the very best parts of me; I am reclaiming my power as a human being and as a woman. I am risking a lot to put the best I've got out there. Identifying myself as a lesbian is like putting my finger deep inside me to the source of my power and holding it there, to

conduct that power up out of me into the world. It makes me feel good and strong. I feel like I'm freeing myself over and over again from the bonds of my own self-hate, and from the bonds of society's prejudice and destruction. I live in a world that attempts to destroy my people (and literally does), a world that is blatantly, frustratingly, oppressively heterosexual. How often do you see women presented together on TV, for example, where there is not an implicit or explicit affiliation with men—women wither camping with men, or doing their laundry, or dressing up for them, or anguishing over affairs with them? It is infuriating when we lesbians are called 'blatant,' and suffer physical or verbal violence for simply holding hands while walking to the store, while heterosexual

cont. on page 14

SPARE CHANGE: Lesbian Dance and Theatre



photos by Stacey Styles

On October 22, Spare Change Productions easily captivated an audience of 50 at "An Evening of Lesbian Dance and Theater."

The Thornes Market event was a benefit held to raise money for knee surgery for Keishya, one of the dancers. When the first piece, a group improvisation by Payasa Treedance, Jean Wagner, and Keishya, featured finger-snapping, moving sequences, it was

poignant to hear their pronouncement: "knees...angry knees." Of course, there were also "cranky ankles" and "seductive shoulders" which drew chuckles from the audience. At the end "slow, loving arms" moved the dancers into a stilled jumble of intertwined limbs.

Payasa's "Not My Own" was created by the need to speak out against genocide/gynocide. The accompanying music was Karen Beth's "This Land is

Not My Own." As Payasa danced with intensity and fixed focus, the lighting created double shadows on the back wall, adding partners.

Jean Wagner's compact body lent special depth to her solo piece accompanied by "O-oh, Child." The reminder, "things are gonna get easier," punctuated a dance that began with poses resembling Greek statuary. These changed as she reached up and out; tentative stretches followed by intentional steps to studied postures. From a child's experiments with the world around her, to a dance recital, Jean shared the process of growth and development.

A plaintive "Ring around the rosie" began Keishya's "Ring Fall Down" and she dropped to the floor and spun around, then sat cradling her knees. Moving to a chair under a lamp, she began her diary, "Dear God, Hi, It's me, Keishya. Remember when...Now I'm giving you a second chance." A badly hurt knee is not healed by god-bargaining and Keishya must rise painfully to prop herself on crutches across the polished wood floor.

"I used to be dancing 5 or 6 hours a day and in a company. I was much more polished then," she said. "This has been a humbling experience."

Although unable to walk for two months, Keishya sees two positive gains: finding a trustworthy surgeon and shifting her priorities. Her former troupe, The Dance Circle Dance

Company, allowed performers no room for direct personal-political statements.

"I'm much more committed to working with Lesbians," she said.

Spare Change addressed this priority in a special piece that showed that dance was not the only medium of the evening. Jean Esther entered, decked out in a slinky, striped knit dress, Girl Scout sash, dark-rimmed glasses and a hat with veil. Her red clown nose was mirrored by Iris Bloom's as she entered, wearing a red polka-dot dress. In a moving and very funny bit, the two clowns acknowledged, approached and got to know each other. Eventually, despite the rubber noses that threatened to keep puckered lips at a distance, the two shared a kiss.

While at times the dance pieces seemed to run together and the format of repetitive words or phrases was not always effective, the evening of lesbian dance and theater offered a significant exchange. Spare Change productions had much to offer. Art and drama traded for financial support...this form of mutual aid enriches us all.



Latina Writers Conference



Eliana Ortega

by Eliana Ortega

The conference was most successful for it provided a meeting place, a real "encuentro" for Latina writers. The famous and the not-so-famous contributed equally with their ideas on literature, women's life and work, politics and the destiny of the Latin American continent. It was great be-

cause for once, there were so many of us together examining our history and traditions, and recognizing our common social, cultural and emotional and political interests--although we all came from distant places. There was joy in defining ourselves (we are generally defined by others: men and the colonial power) and sharing our definition with the North American public.

Keynote speaker Sara Castro set the tone for the conference calling for a searching look at Latin American literature, certainly as women, but above all as Latin women, to recover a historical context.

Most writers defined themselves as Latinas first, part of the liberation struggle of a whole people, and then as women struggling against Latino men. As one said: "I write for my people."

It was obvious at the conference that Latina women have created their own voice which is not imitative of the traditional male voice. According to an Argentine critic, "From a typical popular and marginal position women can create a realm of resistance to the prevalent power." The trick, she says, is that women have taken the space assigned

them by males and changed the meaning of that space. By transforming such space women can reorganize the whole structure socially, culturally and politically from outside male dominance. In other words, men have shunted women and women writers off to the side and isolated them from what they regarded as the active center of intellectual life. Women writers have used that isolation to develop their own modes of thought and ideas unhindered by male dominance. They have no desire to belong to that male space; on the contrary there is strong resistance. The conference itself demonstrated this aspect of Latina writers' development, for there was no resemblance to conferences dominated by men. There were no superstars, there was no desire to defeat anybody; on the contrary there was excitement at the chance to listen to each other and to share ideas.

Attendance at the conference, which was the largest gathering of Latina writers on this continent, exceeded expectations. More than 250 persons attended, including at least 100 students from Cornell, Rutgers, CUNY, Brown, Stonybrook, Princeton, and other



Patricia Gonzalez

schools

The organizers of the conference, Patricia Gonzalez and Eliana Ortega will publish two books out of the conference proceedings, one with Ediciones Huracan in Puerto Rico.

cont. on page 14

The Clear Red Stone: A Myth and the Meaning of Menstruation

by Wendy Simpson

The Clear Red Stone is a book that serves to change the false information surrounding menstruation; that it is something to be feared and hidden, and that it puts women into a weakened state both emotionally and physically. We as women have been encouraged, if not forced, to be alienated from ourselves and our bodily functions. History, largely a male monopoly, is being questioned and ultimately rewritten by the women's movement. Referring to menstruation as "the curse" is only one of the obvious manifestations of the "bad press" this natural process has received.

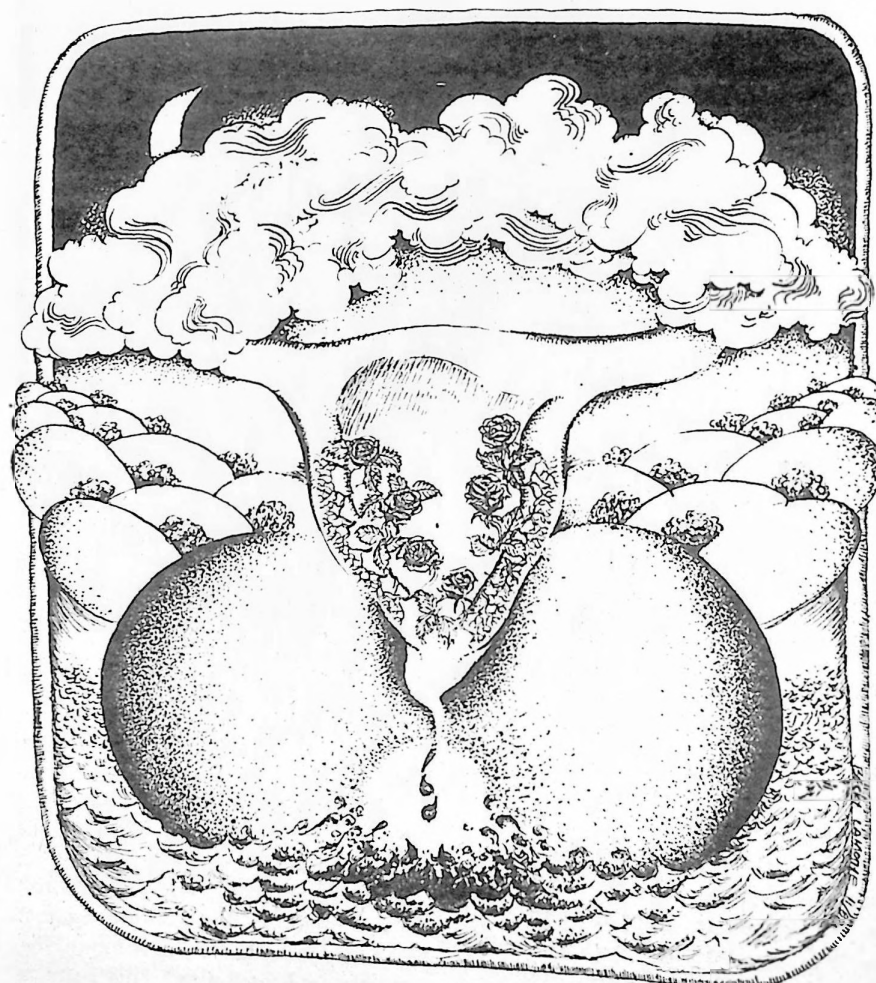
The Clear Red Stone by Alexandra Kolkmeier chooses to go to the core of the problem, and changes the myths with a format and language that is accessible to all ages.

In the first chapter of the book, Cayenne, a young woman of thirteen, dreams of meeting Mother Earth. During the Journey she meets a turtle, a snake and a peacock. Kolkmeier seems careful not to show Cayenne in the typical passive role; Cayenne and the animals have a seemingly equal exchange of information. "The turtle listened closely, not wanting to miss a word, for she had heard many different tales from young girls." It is as if somewhere deep inside Cayenne a story, carefully woven, is coming out. "I think that I must have cycles: the rising and setting of the Moon

and the sun and the changing of the seasons." Each of the animals gives her a gift to carry along with her on her journey. Eventually the peacock asks her to tell her "the story of the first girl who shed her blood towards the Earth." Mother Earth shares the story with Cayenne, in which a young girl's first drop of blood upon the Earth turns into "a beautiful clear red stone."

In the second chapter of the book, Cayenne and her mother talk openly about cramps and the organs and glands involved in menstruation. This section includes drawings that illuminate the conversation between mother and daughter. Mother and daughter also discuss exercise, diet and other factors which can affect the menstrual cycle.

The book ends with a recipe for cramp tea and simply-written definitions of fallopian tubes, ovulation, and more. Once again Kolkmeier is thoughtful and direct. This is a book for all women, those just experiencing menstruation and those who have been for years. *The Clear Red Stone* is giving each of us the opportunity to discover that each woman's menstrual process is unique as well as beautiful. Alexandra Kolkmeier dedicates the book "To Our Daughters." We must embrace this "new" knowledge, knowledge that has been kept from us for thousands of years. Menstruation is a natural and beautiful process.



graphic by Becky LaMothe

For Noreen Winchester

by Kore Sapphire



Noreen Winchester, a twenty-one year old Irish woman, was arrested and charged with murdering her father. She said he had raped she and her sisters regularly in the nine years since her mother's death. She was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. (information from "Sister Courage")

i
in the year of blood
and much bad weather,
i took my first communion,
in a dress
freckled with red
where the needle had
pierced
skin.
the spots could have been berries
in the loose, arthritic embroidery,
but when i prayed to mama to get a
thimble
when i took the sewing away
so i could hold those hands
"don't worry for me, Noreen," she'd say,
"i'm the one's supposed to mother you"
it went on that way until she died.
then she let me care for her,
brush back her hair,
and touch her cheeks,
skin so delicate
i was afraid i'd break
her dead woman's face.

ii. After the Funeral
plants died in the yard,
with dry
with dead
white as stars;
skeletons of plants.
water all ran murky;
dark as mud,
sludge from the faucet
and such a stench to it
not even the water
works tonight
not even water anymore.
papa came to me at the sink,
he came to me in the pantry,
and on rock-studded land,
he lay me down
like hay on the ground
to soften it for him.
he spread me out like a bride.
i was his wife,
my sisters
each a mistress.
he had them when i wasn't home,
he called me jealous,
shoved into me,
pulling my hair: "silky, silky..."

iii
i am meat to cook
am meat to slaughter
hang me up and slash the vein,
blood spurt out sweet
and dark
watch me twitch.
i am sewage, leprous,
while i sleep my skin falls away
peels back like wallpaper.
i am full of holes;
air goes through me,
whistling,
my vagina
breeds disease
has teeth
could kill an army, father said.
"ooh you're rough"
and he greased me with pig
and i smelled like bacon frying,
and i made a good breakfast,
for a pious man,
who said he was a preacher.
"i can send you to heaven, Noreen,
just keep like i'm doin' now,
slamming your belly just so. a man once
told me
there's a way to fuck a woman
so it kills her. i know it must true.
i know i could learn it"

iv.
i am not your silky daughter.

i see demons in the mirror,
at night they pinch me and
make my pulse beat hard.
last week i watched my sister,
after you were with her;
she stood without blinking and shook
like electroshock
like an addict
like a lunatic
she shook like a grieving woman
vomiting beside the grave
clawing dirt.
she's eleven years old, my sister,
and her eyes
looked like a woman birthing
just like mama's face.
i remember
her hair all in her mouth,
her eyes
amazed.

v.
"don't dare tell the priest," you told her.
i am my sister's confessor.
no one should hear the stories she tells
no one should hear
there's a way to fuck a
mama!
he came to me in the pantry.
he came to me in the pantry.
where we kept
the knives.
his skin was tough like a pig
his heart was dry like a famine potato.
his blood was red like embroidery.
our father who art in dirt
in heaven
amen.



Graphic by Dory Hippauf

THE OTHER GRANDMOTHER

by Marion Cohen

Every child has an other grandmother.
The one whose husband isn't called
Grandpa.
The one they visit only on holidays
and only for dinner.
The one whispered about in the home
kitchen,
the one about whom they say "Don't
repeat this to her."

The one with the long hallway
The one with the 25 floors
the one with the back garden.
The one with leaves and trees arranged
as
though some giant lived there only in
the
early mornings, as though that giant
stamped
and frolicked near the door from dawn
'til 9:00 and then raced into and out of
those
bushes in the back left corner.
Every child has an other grandmother.
And every other grandmother has a
child.

A Day in the Dark

by Gretchen Van Keyper

Have you ever seen the underside of the ground you walk on? It was a brisk, bright, November day when a group of eight adventurous women from western Massachusetts traveled to southeastern New York to do just that. There, in Clarksville, are located the regionally well-known Wards-Gregory caves.

From the parking area near the town center, a short hike takes you through the woods to the sinkhole with a huddle of rocks at its bottom marking the cavern entrance. Trip leader Sue Tippet had advised us as to what to wear and expect, and we looked a motley crew in our well-chosen grubby outerwear and helmets with headlamps. She covered basic caving techniques and safety, and answered questions to dispel uncertainties before co-leader Nancy Helen led the way down.

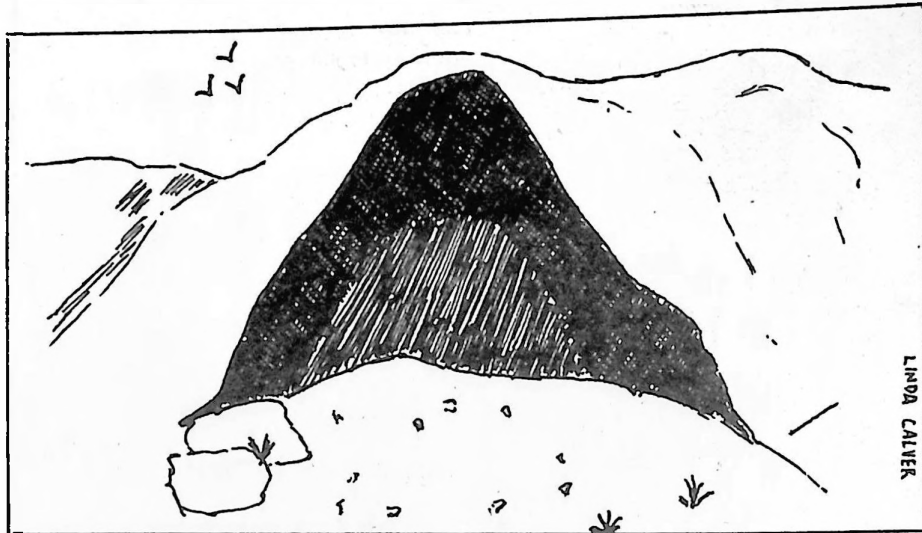
Through an opening in the rock, two feet in diameter, we lowered ourselves feet first. Butterflies in the stomach were quickly swept away as the wonders of the world below came to light. Water droplets glittered like stars over the walls and ceilings, and massive hunks of rocks lay claim to the floor where they fell.

Making our way farther in, we could see various forms of mineral deposition. Fragile soda straws hung to the top where water drops were slowly forming stalactites, or mineral icicles. Scalloped fringes like a rim of fancy pastry adorned once square rock edges. Small alcoves in the wall displayed flowing mineralized waterfalls. In places, the top of the cave looked like a texturized ceiling panel

and on closer inspection, revealed tiny fossils of former ocean creatures.

A small, muddy stream wandering in and out of side tunnels lead our course, and at times our pathway coincided with its graveled bed. We soon learned that the methods of propelling oneself through a cave are as varied as the rock formations. On occasion, we were lucky enough to walk upright, by paying close attention to the floor, which varies between mud, large rock, gravel, slippery incline, and solid rock with a rippled illusion of sandy beach. When the ceiling got much lower, we resorted to either the lurching hunchback method, nose to the ground, or the effective but spasmodic duck waddle. A narrower space had us down on hands and knees in a spider crawl, cringing as knees hit a sharp rock or cold puddle. There are a few even more restrictive passages where the Superman pose was the only recourse. With hands stretched ahead to pull, and legs straightened back with no room to bend, it took a lot of grunting and groaning to make forward progress.

At the end of the passageway was a large chamber containing a deep, quiet lake the size of a swimming pool, an archway where the river meets the lake and a high vaulted ceiling. One by one we extinguished our headlamps as we sat around the smooth, sloped banks of the lake. Anyone who fears intruders in the night knows how sounds are magnified by darkness. Inside a cave, the darkness is so complete you don't know how close your hand is to your face until you touch it. Dripping water all around



eerily echoes in dark recesses. Fluttering bats' wings go by as the tiny inhabitant is awakened by visitors. A faint rumbling like a truck materializes overhead into the voices of other explorers. Our senses were enhanced like those of a nocturnal creature.

Our lights back on, we next discovered that the best rooms in the cave were the hardest to get to. One of them was the Twinkle Room at the far end of the lake. After a treacherous trip along the slick angled edge of the lake and a short, tight squeeze through the room's narrow entrance, we were rewarded by a myriad of twinkles of water droplets from a miniature chapel ceiling and delicate mineral formations in a relatively undisturbed state. Later, returning toward the entrance, we further developed our caving techniques with a long narrow squeeze into another small side room, this one with a cascade of glistening white limestone along one side.

It is an exciting, exhausting way to spend the afternoon, and after three hours underground we emerged into the daytime world again, glad to see the sun still shining after an exhilarating introduction to the world of caves.

"Women Outdoors" was incorporated in 1980 to provide a clearinghouse for women whose vocation or avocation lay in the outdoors. Our goals are to:

- ☆ Build a facilitating network in which women can get in touch with other women with similar interests and values;

- ☆ Create a supportive network which encourages women to expand their leadership and outdoor skills;

- ☆ Encourage an ethic of stewardship of our earth.

Anyone interested in joining Women Outdoors should send \$15 to Women Outdoors, Curtis Hall, 474 Boston Ave., Medford, Mass. 02155. For more information, call Sue Tippet, 256-0898.

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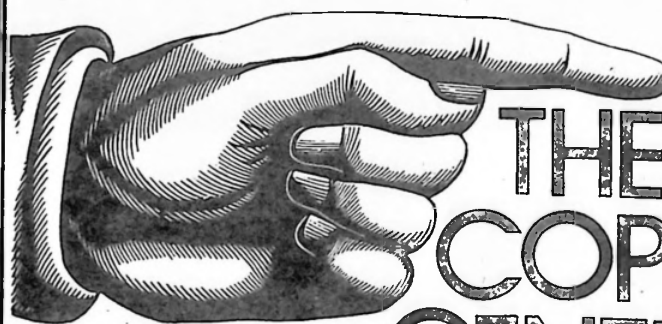
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The "Free Day Care Will Be Provided" Blues

by Marion Cohen

Elle and I are taking turns pushing the stroller towards Chestnut Street. Whoever doesn't push the stroller has to carry the bag of diapers and extra clothes.

"We're gonna get to play with other kids and the toys," Elle asks.

"Yep," I answer. "You're going to the part of the conference with the kids and the toys. I go to the part with the speeches."

"Oh good!" goes Elle.

But a second later she changes her mind. "I wanna hear the speeches with you," she whines.

"Well, you're not going to," I tell her simply, and she smirks.

A few blocks later and our moods are not quite as gala. Elle is not longer so gung-ho about pushing the stroller, and when I push it, she lets the bag drag on the sidewalk.

That's the thing about conferences, I think. They have free day care, all right, but what about carting the kids to and from the conference? In fact, from's gonna be worse than to, because we'll all be tired, and suppose I meet someone I wanna go out for ice cream with or something? No, I reflect, nothing'll ever beat good ol'-fashioned 24-hour day care centers, or something equally radical.

I also begin to have a few nagging doubts. "Free day care," it said on the flyer. But suppose they were just kidding.

Suppose there was a mix-up or something? Suppose they change their minds? Suppose it turns out ya hafta have registered your kids in advance, like ya hafta do for a regular day-care center? I recall the NOW conference, when someone brought her four-month-old baby up to the day-care desk and they said, "Huh? A baby? We're not equipped for babies." Well, Arin's two years old, but suppose the day care at this particular conference is only for kids over three? Like most nursery schools. Suppose they go, "Day care? Oh yes, day care. Well, no one else brought kids so we were told the day care people to go

home." Or suppose, as once actually happened, they say, "Oh yes, well... the day care is at the local nursery school, and they left on a trip at 8:30 this morning?"

Oh yeah, and suppose, just suppose, Arin happens to start acting up just as we get to the day care room, and they go, "YKK! We can't handle him!" Or suppose they look at Elle and say, "Oh my! She's wearing a dress and carrying a doll! That's not *our* idea of non-sexist child-rearing. We don't allow sexist children at a feminist conference."

The day-long conference is about one-third over. It's about 11:00 A.M. I'm sitting in the semi-darkened room about to watch the movie that the Women's Health Collective is showing.

"Hi," says a voice in front of me.

"Oh hi," I answer vaguely. "Beverly," says the voice. "Remember, I was at some workshop you were giving..."

"Oh right," I go. "Politics of Motherhood. How're ya doin'?"

"Foine."

"Hey, how come you have your kids with you?" I ask. "There's day care downstairs, ya know..."

"Yea, but my kids don't know the people there," she answers.

Damn it! I'm thinking. I thought I explained things like that at my workshop. How it's the adults who are hung up on new experiences, not kids.

But I only say, "That's the *fun* of it. That's the thing *my* kids were so excited about."

Just then I spot a familiar face in the doorway. Uh-oh, that face is *too* familiar. It's none other than Marielle Cohen, my first-born child.

She's with a young woman with whom she seems to be on very good terms, and she's got one of those mischievous looks on her face at the two of them walk toward me.

"She said she missed her mommy," explains the woman helplessly.

Of course I take Elle onto my lap. What will the woman think of me if I don't? And I don't want to disturb the movie.

But I'm fuming. First of all, I bargained for full-time day-care. How dare they

interrupt me?! Secondly, if they had day care at the places where *men* worked they sure as hell wouldn't pull a stunt like that. "She said she missed her daddy?" I doubt it. Thirdly, what does this woman believe Elle does when she misses me and I'm not on the premises? But mainly, I know, I'd be willing to stake my life on it, that Elle didn't really miss her mommy.

She's been going to the baby-sitter full time five days a week since she was two. She's had several changes of baby-sitters, been in several day-care centers and nursery schools, and had all sorts of strangers loving her. Never before has she "said she missed her mommy". She has gone through stages of crying when I first brought her in the morning, but never of changing her mind mid-course and "missing her mommy". Some kids, I suppose, do this, but Elle just never did.

Sure, I realize there's always a first time. Sure, I realize moods change. Sure, I'll admit to off-days, off-moments. Still, I don't think Elle really missed me. What's more likely, I'm thinking, is that one or two of the other kids started saying they missed their mommies, and Elle decided to take her cue. That's probably how it happened. And if the woman had simply said, "Well, I'm sorry, but your mommy's not available right now," I'm sure Elle would've smirked and found something to do.

How dare they interrupt me? Sure, it happens to be okay, this time, but I might have been engrossed in something -- the movie, e.g., or one of the books being sold at the booths. Are mothers never safe from their children? Are they always on call? Are they always potentially working?

I thought I'd gotten over it, feeling this way. I've long long ago stopped not sleeping at night because the baby might wake up, or feeling more relaxed when the kids are sleeping over Edie's because just knowing they're behind that door, although sleeping, makes me nervous. I haven't felt that way in five, six years. I thought I got over it. I *did* get over it.

Anyway: I take Elle onto my lap.

"I missed you," she sulks.

"I figured you would," I smirk, and she

smirks back.

I hold her throughout the movie. She's good and quiet, and doesn't prevent me from becoming even more convinced of the fact that the medical profession is hung up on being a profession.



Graphic by Pam Purdy

After the movie, I send Elle downstairs and go back to the conference proper. On the way back, I spot another familiar face in the doorway.

Oh, no, I groan.

It couldn't be. It just couldn't. It couldn't be. It just couldn't.

Yes, it could. It's Arin this time.

Oh, no.

Now Arin's not talking that much yet; he *couldn't* have said "I miss my mommy". But I guess they just expected him to miss his mommy, so eventually he did. Especially if the other kids there were prompting him.

In fact, maybe these other kids taught him to say "I miss my mommy". And maybe he didn't even know what it meant when he said it.

Well, I've decided. Elle, maybe, but Arin, no! Once a kid *that* age spots his mother, she can never get rid of him without a scene. Especially since this time the day-care people wouldn't be all new and exciting to him. He'd be clinging to me forever and ever, especially since it's around his naptime. In fact, that's probably why he's here now. He probably started acting fussy and they probably asked him if he was tired and he probably shook his head no and they probably believed him. Then they probably asked him if he wanted to go see his mommy.

Well, it's not gonna work this time. Elle, maybe-- Arin, no. I smirk, cover my face with my hands, duck down under the crowd, and quietly sneak away.

Army

cont. from page 5

a band of eighty men. It was hard at first. I was 18 years old, 3,000 miles away from home and very lonely. The boys in the band weren't much help, but I had known to expect that. Men were generally resentful of women in their units. My band had been allowing women to join for only about a year. Many men felt invaded and didn't know how to relate to women. To some, we were all "whores" or dykes--in other words, very negative people.

Although for me the situation remedied itself in six months time and I was respected as a person and musician, the fact that "I" was accepted means little in the larger scheme of things. The men I worked with, some of whom I grew to know well, still saw most women through glasses with interchangeable "Slut/Virgin" lenses. In recent years, the addition of a third "lesbian" or "dyke" lense has proven to be the most threatening to women. Women who did their jobs well and were respected by women and men alike, were only "exceptions" as far as most men were concerned.

This past weekend I was reunited with three ex-army buddies. The four of us hadn't all been together in well over four years. Carla and Diane are both Californians and Carolyn is from Tennessee. Though I'm the only native New Englander, we all now live within 100 miles of one another in Boston and Western Mass.

We did what all old soldiers do when they reconvene: drank wine, sang army songs, and shared war stories.

Diane got pregnant while in the army and was severely harassed for it. Several higher ranking men in our unit attempted to guilt-trip her out of the army, and when she wouldn't go, she was constantly ordered to perform extra duties.

Carla knew a man who had been told by his drill sgt. to "fuck only W.A.C.'s" because that's what they're there for. Uncle Sam pays for their birth control.

Diane and Carla's reasons for joining the army were similar to mine. They graduated from high school and didn't know what to do next. What they needed was a legitimate excuse to "get out from under" at home, and the army provided it. Carolyn's motives were a bit more immediate: she was broke.

Looking back, I'm struck by the low level of political awareness we all possessed. Here we were, joining forces with the United States War Machine in order to put off facing the real world for a few more years. We thought nothing of what the army stood for, only what we could get out of it.

I'm not ashamed of having been in the army. At the time, it seemed the right thing to do; the only thing for me. I grew, learned a great deal about myself and others, and did some things I'll (hopefully) never do again in my life.

I would be glad to talk with any woman who is thinking of joining any branch of the armed services, or with any woman who was or is now in the service. Call or write the newspaper and they'll contact me.

Fier

Cont. from page 6

Despite the fact that Jean and Ellen were somewhat unsure of their parts, the arrangements for sax and trumpet in "Accept the Change" were sophisticated and inventive. Debbie and the band continued to flow with the high energy created in "Accept the Change" with "Back to the Womb."

At the end of the concert Debbie called for a moment of silence. She asked that we gather and send out healing energy to all women who have been physically violated. She closed the concert with a moving rendition of Alive's "Spirit Healer," inspiring a standing ovation. As an encore she performed the title cut of her first album, "In Your Hands."

Throughout the concert, Debbie revealed an intimate part of herself as well as her talent. We look forward to sharing in her continual growth.

Debbie Fier of Wendell, Ma., has been playing music for fourteen of her twenty-five years. Her mentor, Mary Lou Williams, is her strongest influence. Debbie recently performed in the Hampshire Jazz Festival, and plays regularly at Steeplejack's and other local cafes. In Your Hands, on her independent label "Freedom's Music," is available locally for \$7.00.

Letter

cont. from page 9

uals can hang on each other, kiss in public, and have intercourse in cars and public parks. It all makes me very angry. In some ways, though, anger is necessary for my survival.

This is not a phase or a "stage" or a "trip," and I resent my life, my relationship with Judy, and my power being labeled as such. What I ask from you is what I've asked of my parents--that you love me as I am, accept my lover into your home with the same hospitality that you accept the partner of any of your other friends or relatives, and read "Loving Someone Gay" and "Sappho Was a Right-On Woman."


It's important to me not to have to hide my life and love, and not to have to feel like a freak with my friends. The world makes it very clear that it considers me a freak; I'm not strong enough to remain open with friends who think that also. Given that you've said you're angry about me being a lesbian, continuing to be friends will require work. I'd like to support you in this.

Love,
Linda



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December

THURSDAY DECEMBER 9

JUDY SLOAN at Womenspace Coffeehouse in Hartford, CT. Judy will be performing new work.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 10

CALAMITY JANE is presented by Present Stage. The story of the way a woman becomes a myth in her own lifetime. Elk Lodge, 43 Center Street, Northampton. Call 586-5886 for more info.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 11

LESBIAN HOMESHOW in Northampton. Lesbians who are interested call 1-628-3850 or 584-1610.

CALAMITY JANE See Fri. Dec. 10.

PRIME TIME sponsored by Chrysalis Theatre Eclectic. The play by Andrea Hairston will play at 8:00, third floor of Thorne's Market, Northampton. Admission \$3.50.

BENEFIT PERFORMANCE EXTRAVAGANZA: Judy Sloan, Alison Farrell, Jacqueline Pickett, Michael Mills, Larry Farrell, Walter Gilson, and Ruth Resnick. 8 pm, Jewish Community Center, New Haven, 1156 Chapel St. tickets are \$5. All funds raised will be matched by a grant from the New Haven Foundation. For Ticket info: 10 Box 1867, New Haven, CT. 06508. (203) 397-2187.

LITTLE FLAGS THEATRE presents "New Rise of the Master Race" Theatre for the People! 8 pm, Hampden Theatre, Southwest, UMass. Students and Senior Citizens \$1.00. General Admission \$2.00. Reservations 545-2803.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 12

CALAMITY JANE See Fri. Dec. 10.

SUZANNE BARKAN, very fine folksinger, Steeplejack's Restaurant, Sunderland, 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm.

"THE WESTFIELD STRIKE"--a video made by a local filmmaker on the Sterling Radiator Strike. Part of the "Liberation Film Series" to benefit the Northampton Committee on Central America. Pleasant Street Theatre 2:00 pm, \$1.50 donation.

FRACTURED ARTIFACTS developed and designed by Bonac Beste and Stephen Pocock, two Hampshire College students. The piece deals with cultural artifacts and their correlations to the flux in human relations and reality. Main dance studio, Hampshire's Music/Dance Building, 8 pm. Admission \$1.00.

KAY GARDNER at the Ironhorse Coffeehouse. Call for info.

MONDAY DECEMBER 13

CAREER ALTERNATIVES FOR WOMEN in health care: a lecture sponsored by Women in Science Seminar Series. Hampshire College, Cole Science Center, room #114. Contact: Pamela Mack 549-4600 ext. 518.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 14

HEALTH HAZARDS OF VDT'S (video display terminals)--facilitated by Myra Hindus and Betsy Hamilton. 12-1 pm, room 917 of the Campus Center. Sponsored by the Working Women's Task Force of Everywoman's Center. Call 545-0883. A FREE workshop.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 15

DEADLINE for presentations for New England Women's Studies Association Conference "Women's Health: Body, Mind, and Spirit" (see announcement).

DEALING WITH HOLIDAY STRESS: facilitated by Fern Celisnick. 7-9 pm at Everywoman's Center, Wilder Hall, UMass. Call 545-0883.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 19

"DECISION TO WIN--THE FIRST FRUITS"--this film presents an engrossing portrait of life in the province of Morazan, El Salvador. Part of the "Liberation Film Series," to benefit the Northampton Committee on Central America. Pleasant Street Theatre 2:00 pm, \$1.50 donation.

LESBIANS SPEAK OUT ON ADDICTIONS: this event will combine selected speakers with audience participation. In addition to speaking about the nature of addictions we want to focus on how social and economic conditions affect us in relation to our addictions. i.e. class, race, cultural background, being lesbians, physical abilities, appearances, etc. We encourage all lesbians to come to this supportive atmosphere. Speak-out 2-5 pm, Potluck 5:30-7 pm, Social Gathering 7-10 pm. Please label ingredients of food and bring musical instruments. Child-care provided. call 586-3183 by Dec. 12. Location is wheelchair accessible, but bathrooms are not. For more info. ask at Women's Books or call 586-8127 or 586-3383.

SHANE DEVINE AND GISELLE L'ITALIAN doing a variety of holiday songs at Steeplejack's in Sunderland Center.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 21

WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION sponsored by Everywoman's Center, UMass. Bring a natural giveaway, e.g. stones, feathers, herbs, and a candle to keep. 7 pm - 9 pm at Everywoman's Center, Wilder Hall, UMass. For info, call 545-0883.



Catherine D'Amato will be performing at the Common Woman Club in Northampton February 26 at 9 pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE NEW ALEXANDRIA LESBIAN LIBRARY in Northampton, MA. is seeking 3 lesbians to complete its core group. No librarian or archival skills required but welcome. For more information interested lesbians should call Bet at (413) 584-7617 or Susan at (413) 586-8189. Or write to NALL, PO Box 402, Florence, MA. 01060.

"WHAT IS TO BE UNDONE"--a series of workshops on racism and anti-semitism are planned by Gay and Lesbian Activists for January and February. Watch for posters and future announcements for further details.

TUESDAY JANUARY 4

BRENDA PINARDI, Boston area painter, exhibits her drawings and paintings, "Levels of Existence," at Gnosis Gallery 257 Orange St., New Haven, CT. 06510, 562-9152. Reception: January 9, 4-6 p.m. Showing through January 28.

TUESDAY JANUARY 11

FIVE COLLEGE INTERTERM PLAYWRITING WORKSHOP: This year's guest playwright in residence will be Steve Gooch, author of "Female Transport" which will be staged at Smith College in February. The works-in-progress will be presented January 28 at 8 pm in Emily Dickinson Hall, Hampshire College, and on January 29-30 at 8 pm in the Hallie Flanagan Studio Theatre, Smith College. For more info: Kathleen Cuneo, 584-2700, ext. 840.

SATURDAY JANUARY 15

"HOPE IN THE NUCLEAR AGE" a one-day workshop for women in Northampton with despair and empowerment trainers Linda Tumberello and Jeanie Erlbaum. Call for more info: 584-1000.

UNLEARNING RACISM with Joan Lester. 9 am to 5 pm \$50.00 Registration 1 person at UMass. Division of Continuing Education, University Tower, SE Entrance, M-TH, 8:30 am - 7 pm, Friday, 8:30 am - 5 pm.

MONDAY JANUARY 17

WOMANCRAFT INTRODUCTORY evening in Amherst with Jean-Janani Erlbaum. Call 584-1000 or 773-9744 for more info.

SATURDAY JANUARY 22

UNLEARNING RACISM with Joan Lester. 9 am - 5 pm \$50.00 Registration 1 person at UMass. Division of Continuing Education, University Tower, SE Entrance M-TH, 8:30 am - 7 pm, Friday, 8:30 am - 5 pm.

"OUR BODIES, OUR SELF-IMAGES" a two-day workshop for women. See classifieds.

MONDAY JANUARY 24

WOMEN'S YOGA in Amherst. Call Jean-Janani Erlbaum at 584-1000 or 773-9744.

THURSDAY JANUARY 27

WOMANCRAFT course in psychic self-healing starts in Northampton. Call Jean-Janani Erlbaum at 584-1000 or 773-9744.

SUNDAY JANUARY 30

LAURA ANDERSON doing original songs, guitar and voice, at Steeplejack's in Sunderland Center.

classified

APARTMENT AVAILABLE JANUARY 1, 1983. Four bedrooms, spacious, second and third floor. Walking distance from Northampton Center. \$560/month plus utilities. Call 586-1740.

FLOWER ESSENCES help you heal emotional and mental shock, deal with fears, increase your strength. Free sessions for women in crisis situations with no money to spare. Helpful for children's problems too. Call Ellen, 774-4515 (home), 545-2651 (work: Tu/Thu/Fri only).

ASTROLOGY OF RELATIONSHIPS. Ongoing course, Mon. eves. 7:30 pm, Montague. Also possible Amherst course. Call Ellen at 774-4515, (545-2651 Tu/Thu/Fri only).

FEMINIST LIVING IN N.Y.C. would like to do occasional weekend apartment-trade with feminist living in Northampton area, so I can visit the Valley, have a comfortable, one-person apartment on Upper West Side. Would like to trade on intermittent weekends for one-person apartment here. Please write: L.K., Apartment #109, 418 Central Park West, N.Y., New York, 10025.

WHAT DO I SEE when I look in the mirror? How do I feel walking down the street? What would I like my body to be? Why? "OUR BODIES, OUR SELF-IMAGES" A TWO-DAY WORKSHOP for women who exercise or want to exercise, to examine their body-concepts, clarify what they want & why, learn tools to reach these physical goals. Sat.-Sun., Jan. 22-23, 10 am - 1 pm \$20/day (barter possible). Call Val at Maximum Performance, 586-5119.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GALA IS LOOKING for office space to rent or share. Must be wheelchair accessible and close to town. Any leads or suggestions, write: GALA P.O. Box 1084, Northampton. 01061.

FREE COUNSELING SERVICES: Free counseling and information is available for people who have experienced a past or recent rape. Counselor/Advocates are trained helpers who offer listening and support in a confidential setting. Assistance is also offered to people who have experienced other forms of abuse including battering, attempted rape, assault, or incest. We believe that recovery from these life threatening incidents is enhanced through counseling. Please call 545-0883 for appointments or 545-0800 24 hours.

LESBIAN INCEST SURVIVORS support group--for lesbians in any stage of process: from memory fragments to many memories. On-going, non-facilitated, self-directed support group is the hope. Lesbians with mother-daughter experience especially encouraged. FREE. Call Bet: 584-7616.

THE HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION for Mental Health is sponsoring weekly workshops at the Social Club at 90 King Street in Northampton. Wednesdays from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. are poetry workshops, Sundays 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. are Yoga classes, and Friday nights 9 to midnight are coffeehouses. All people are welcome.

BETTER BIRTH: A Guide to Healthy and Satisfying Pregnancy, Birth, and Mothering is a book-in-progress by a rural woman who seeks input from mothers/midwives/childbirth-educators/etc. To share your experience, write for a questionnaire to Vanessa Hackleman, P.O. Box 1416, Mariposa CA. 95338.

WOMEN'S CRAFT MARKET: 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA. (in the basement of New Words Bookstore) open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

CARING FOR CHILDREN in a Social Context: eliminating racism, sexism and other patterns of discrimination: a practical guide written to help parents and child care workers recognize patterns of discrimination and take steps to creatively build multi-cultural, non-discriminatory environments that reflect the positive contributions of parents, children staff and concerned community people. It includes concrete suggestions for increasing parent participation and has a section giving suggestions for work in the classroom. A short resource section included.

Available in pamphlet form: 28 pages, \$2.50 prepaid, The Multicultural Project/678 Mass. Ave., P.O. Box 125/Cambridge, MA. 02139.

LESBIAN PARENTING ANTHOLOGY: soliciting materials intended for publication (essays, stories, poems, letters, interviews, critiques, reviews, visual arts, tapes, etc.). Anthology to reflect our DIVERSITY of experience: race, class, culture, ethnicity, age, able-bodiedness, nationality. Will place emphasis on women traditionally denied access to publishing. Write: ANTHOLOGY, c/o Jeane Vaughn, 217 Palo Verde Terrace, Santa Cruz, CA. 95060. DEADLINE August 1983.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY will be celebrated at UMass on March 8. If you are interested in planning this celebration call 545-0341.

THE NEW ENGLAND WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION is sponsoring their seventh annual conference March 26, 1983. This year's title is "Women's Health: Body, Mind, and Spirit." To submit a proposal for a presentation send a one-page description of the presentation, including title, AV equipment needed, and a 50-word description of the presentation to Eleanor M. Vander Haegen, Keene State College, Keene, NH 03431 by December 15.

THE VALLEY WOMEN'S CHORUS meets for rehearsal each Mon. at 7 pm on the third floor of Thorne's Market in Northampton. The chorus is open to all women, no audition required. For more info. call Catherine D'Amato, 268-3696.